

**Weekly Report  
Special Enforcement Area  
August 15– 21, 2003**

**Monroe County**

On August 12, Officer Martin Messier observed a diver tossing a catch bag into his vessel north west of Calda Channel. The bag contained 6 undersize crawfish and the Pennsylvania man was cited for the violation.

On August 14, Investigators Chuck Collins, Al Corfield, and Officer Jay Marvin, while on land patrol at Card Sound, issued one citation for spear fishing in the Upper Keys and two citations for failure to display a divers down flag. Warnings were issued for spearing crawfish, possession of undersize crawfish, and harvesting crawfish within the Card Sound Biscayne Lobster Sanctuary.

On August 15, Officers Seth Kern and Torrey McAlpin responded to information from Pilot John Murphy that the vessel "Grey Wings" was actively fishing north of Bullfrog Banks and potentially trap robbing. During a fisheries inspection the owner/operator was unable to present an SPL at the officer's request. The Miami man was cited for the violation and 228 pounds of crawfish were seized. The man is currently on probation status for numerous other offenses of fish and wildlife laws.

Officer James Johnson responded to the report of a vessel found free floating with some gear on board at the No Name Fish Camp, Big Pine Key. The officer's investigation revealed the inflatable Zodiac had merely drifted away and belonged to a man aboard a nearby sailboat. The man was happy to get his boat back, but when the officer verified ownership of the Zodiac by checking the Cape Coral man's identification, an active warrant issued from Monroe County for failure to pay summons was revealed. The man was arrested and delivered to the Monroe County Jail in Marathon.

On August 16, Officers Christopher Mattson, Jay Marvin, Megan Krynicki, Wade Hefner, and Sanctuary Officer Scott LaRosa searched for a diver reported missing off Davis Reef. A friend of the victim and the captain of the boat noticed that the diver's float buoy had not moved since their last observation and when the diver did not surface, they called for help. Just previous to the incident, the victim had been free diving to extensive depths. Search efforts included diving for the victim and conducting grid pattern searches, but the 21 year old man from West Palm Beach was never located.

Officer Megan Krynicki, conducted a vessel stop and fisheries inspection at the Indian Key Fill Boat Ramp when she observed a vessel displaying a very dim anchor light. Three Hialeah residents denied having any fish on the boat and started driving away, but the officer stopped the vessel again and discovered 7 undersize mangrove snapper and undersize lane snapper. In addition they had no safety equipment and the vessel was not registered. The officer also inspected their friends who were fishing on shore and discovered more undersize snapper. One man claimed he bought the fish in Key Largo, however, another companion told the officer they caught the fish. Four citations were issued for possession of the undersize resource and failure to possess a Florida

Saltwater Fishing License. Warnings were issued for interference, numerous boating safety violations, and failure to register a vessel.

On August 16, Sanctuary Officer Liz Reisz issued two citations and 4 warnings to subjects spear fishing in the Upper Keys at the south end of Channel Five Bridge.

Officer Wade Hefner responded to a complaint of two subjects taking over the bag limit of crawfish at Garden Cove Marina in Key Largo. When the officer arrived he observed the subjects transferring a cooler from their boat to a truck. The subjects consented to an inspection of the cooler and the officer discovered 19 crawfish. He issued one citation for possession of over the bag limit of crawfish.

On August 17, Officer Christopher Mattson responded to a medical emergency at Crocker Reef where a man had surfaced from diving and was not breathing. When the officer arrived, the man had recovered but was still having difficulty breathing and was disoriented. The man was transported for medical attention. The officer noticed that the victim was the brother of the captain who the officer recently cited for a resource violation. Officer Mattson also cited a Tavernier man operating a PWC for possession of undersize mangrove snapper and spear fishing in the Upper Keys. Warnings were issued for failure to possess a Florida Saltwater Fishing License and other boating safety violations.

Officer Jason Reiff initiated a vessel stop when he observed a vessel failing to display a divers down flag under the east end of the Long Key Bridge. The captain, from Pompano Beach, was issued citations for possession of 6 undersize crawfish, failure to possess boater safety identification card and given numerous other warnings for vessel registration, resource and boating safety equipment and dive flag violations. The other two men were cited for failure to possess Florida Salt Water Fishing Licenses.

Sanctuary Officer David McDaniel and Scott LaRosa issued citations to two Miami men for fishing within the Carysfort Reef SPA after observing one man in the water spear fishing and the second man hook and line fishing. A few minutes afterward, the officers encountered two men spear fishing on an 80' ledge of North Carysfort. The two Miami men had stringers loaded with a 60 pound black grouper, another 20 pound grouper, cero mackerel, big ocean trigger fish, 15 pound cubera snapper, and other assorted fish on board the vessel. Both men were cited for spear fishing in the Upper Keys and the fish were returned to the resource.

Officer James Johnson observed a red sedan operating at a high rate of speed and failing to stop at a stop sign before entering traffic onto U. S. Highway 1, at the east end of the Seven Mile Bridge. The officer conducted a traffic stop and the three subjects began moving in a suspicious manner. In plain view, the officer noticed a dollar bill protruding from the back of the ashtray. A consent search revealed that inside the dollar bill was a green leafy substance, crack cocaine beneath the front passenger's seat, and another bag of green leafy substance beneath the rear passenger floor mat. All three subjects were arrested and transported to the Monroe County Jail, Marathon. Officer Seth Kern and Monroe County Deputies assisted. The substances field tested positive for marijuana and cocaine and have been forwarded to FDLE for testing.

On August 18, Officer Christopher Mattson issued a citation to a Jupiter man who was fishing north of Alligator Reef for possession of 2 undersize red grouper. In addition the

man was given warnings for possession of undersize gag grouper, undersize mangrove snapper and failure to possess a Florida Salt Water Fishing License.

On August 19, Officer Vicente Lopez assisted the City of Marathon in placing notices on 13 vessels identified as abandoned/derelict. The City of Marathon is making an effort to clean up Book Key Harbor and will conduct the investigations and take all the steps necessary to effect the removal of the vessels in question. FWC assisted in placing the notices, but the City of Marathon will be responsible for all other aspects of the process.

On August 20, Officer David Graham responded to a complaint of subjects taking undersize fish from a private dock in Pirates Cove. The officer's inspection revealed two men in possession of undersize mangrove snapper. The Cape Coral man was cited for the violation and his companion was issued a warning.

Officers Eric Steinmetz and Megan Krynicki assisted the Monroe County Deputies in searching for a robbery suspect that fled after robbing Scottie's hardware and lumber store in Key Largo. The search revealed no evidence of the suspect.

Pilot John Murphy continued to conduct air patrols in a joint effort to provide field data on any suspect commercial crawfish divers diving on illegal habitat in the Lower Keys. He also continued to patrol the Marquesas Keys to detect evidence of turtle nest disturbances and observed no suspicious vessels in the area where previous violations have been documented. The pilot also called in a number of aerial display violations and a vessel in violation of the Eastern Sambo restricted area, however, the vessel was gone by the time sanctuary officers arrived. An arrest was made after the pilot responded to information that a suspected trap robbing vessel was on the water. The pilot located the vessel and conducted extended surveillance and also requested the assistance of Officers Seth Kern and Torrey McAlpin who were on water patrol. The officer's fisheries inspection resulted in a physical arrest for failure to present a valid SPL and 228 pounds of crawfish were seized. The fisherman is currently on probation status for numerous other offenses of fish and wildlife laws.

## **Collier County**

On August 14, at 1430 hours, Officers Zachary Clark and Jared Cloud responded to a report that a sunken 50' vessel containing diesel, paint, and garbage posed an even greater threat to the environment with significant storms approaching. The vessel "Tranquilo" was located in the north end of Rookery Bay along a mangrove shoreline in approximately 8 feet of water depth. A significant amount of debris and trash was already lodged in the mangroves and the officers confirmed the presence of oil and diesel in the water. U. S. Coast Guard, DEP, and the National Response Center were contacted. The officers assisted in identifying the threat and assisting other agencies' efforts to deploy containment booms. The officers will continue to assess the situation.

On August 16, Officer Jared Cloud investigated a suspicious situation off of 858, where he encountered two subjects suspected of poaching with bows and arrows. The officer took blood and tissue samples from the arrows for laboratory testing and summoned the assistance of Officer Felix Collazo and his K-9. The K-9 tracked to a location where the

officers discovered two feeders, two tree stands, and one raccoon. The officers will continue their investigation.

On August 18, Officer Josh Caraker issued citations to an individual in possession of an out of season, undersize snook in Port of the Isle.

On August 20, Officers Zachary Clark and James Umhoefer, conducted a traffic stop on State Road 29, five miles south of I 75. During the traffic stop they requested the assistance of Officer Feliz Collazo along with his K-9. The K-9 was unable to locate any evidence and the information was documented and turned over to Collier County Sheriff's Office.